DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 027 523 AL 001 721

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Subjective Judgments in Sociolinguistic Analysis.

Pub Date Mar 69

Note-17p.; Paper presented at the 20th Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., March 1969.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.95

Descriptors-Cultural Differences, *Dialect Studies, English, Field Interviews, Inner City, Language Styles, Negative Forms (Language), *Negro Dialects, Nonstandard Dialects, Racial Differences, Social Class, Social Dialects, Social Structure, Sociolinguistics, Standard Spoken Usage

Identifiers-*Detroit Language Study

Subjective judgments are useful in linguistic studies to supplement information from objective language data, enlarge our knowledge of public conceptions of social speech communities (such as Negro speech), provide techniques for discussion of social markedness of standard and nonstandard varieties of English, and provide techniques for observations of laymen's evaluations and attitudes toward speech samples. In the Detroit Language Study, analysis of subjective judgments of taped speech supported the objective data that multiple negation, cluster reduction, and pronominal apposition correlate closely with socioeconomic status of the speaker. The characterization of Negro speech as a distinct variety of speech is confirmed by correct identification, from taped samples, of the race of the speaker over 80% of the time. The fact that the lower the socioeconomic status of the speaker, the more accurately it was identified indicates that the speech of the working class is socially marked and the speech of the middle class socially unmarked. (See also related documents AL 001 720 and ED 022 155.) (MK)

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SUBJECTIVE JUDGMENTS IN SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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Georgetown Roundtable
March, 1969

In general, this paper is a report on a recently completed project of the Sociolinguistics Program at C.A.L. I will be concerned, with several of the broad aspects of this project which bear on certain aspects of sociolinguistic theory. Specifically I will address myself to the issues of (1) how objective language data and subjective responses to such data are mutually supportive, (2) the controversy over whether or not there is such a thing as Negro speech, (3) the notion of social markedness, and (4) ways of compensating for the absence of a vocabulary of socially meaningful terms with which the general public can evaluate speech.

Although some of the earliest work which attempted to account for social variation in American speech was done by the Linguistic Atlas researchers, it was not until the present decade that linguists have shown concern for improving on the subjective impressions of Atlas fieldworkers, the vagueness of their social taxonomies as well as the errors of validity and reliability noted by Pickford in her 1956 criticisms of Atlas procedures. Recent concern for using a

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verifiable sociological model for rating the social status of informants is a relatively new aspect of sociolinguistic research, thanks primarily to the rigor of anthropologists (especially Gumperz, Hymes and Bright) in differentiating the social groups to which they were relating linguistic variables.

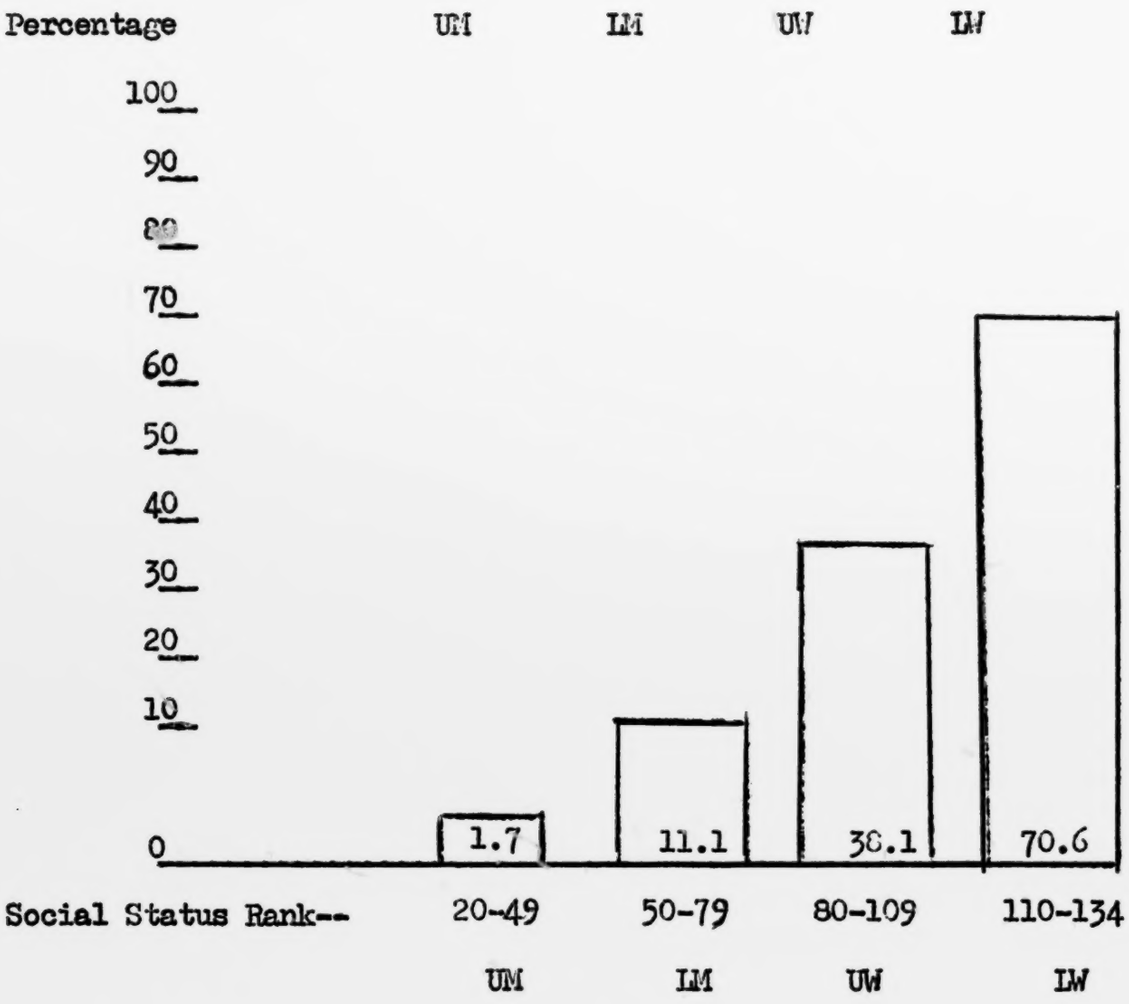
The earliest work which considered social variation in American speech is found in the Linguistic Atlas of U.S. and Canada (Kurath, et al, 1939). Current research has attempted to deal with the methodological weaknesses of the Atlas such as 1) the vagueness and subjectivity of the atlas fieldworkers social taxonomies and 2) the errors of validity and reliability of their procedures (Pickford, 1956).

Among linguists it is clearly the work of Labov that has best combined the insights of both sociology and linguistics. In his study of the social stratification of New York speech he utilized sociologically valid sampling procedures, he devised quantitative measurements of linguistic variables, he elicited speech in different contextual styles, and he explained some of the features which linguists frequently have dismissed as free variations as systematically correlated with social differences. The research of the Sociolinguistic Program at CAL, with its antecedents in the Detroit research formerly at MSU, has incorporated many of the insights of all of its predecessors and, it is hoped, has launched out into some new directions as well. One of these directions, as this paper will bear out, is in the relationship between subjects' objective language data and their subjective reactions to language data and concepts.

Objective Language and Social Stratification

Although linguists have not been known, in recent years, to join linguistic forms with social context, there is a rather strong current movement to expand the focus on linguistic form in isolation (idealized language) to linguistic form in social context (realistic language.) In an effort to set the linguistic data in appropriate sociological contexts, the staff of the Detroit Dialect Study used a modified Hollingshead scale to assign a social number to each person in that city (Shuy, Wolfram and Riley, 1968). The spectrum of assigned social status numbers, which ranged from the highest, 20, to the lowest, 134, was then arbitrarity quartiled.

Having established a tentative social population, the next task was to extract relevant linguistic data from the some 700 tape-recorded, hour long interviews of randomly selected Detroit residents and to display some of these data with the social classes in which they occurred. Figures noting such displays are found in Shuy, Wolfram and Riley (1967) and in Wolfram (1969). The following figure, modified from Shuy, Wolfram and Riley (1967) is illustrative of these displays.



Multiple Negation: Social Stratification
Figure 1

For each informant all instances of negatives co-occurring with indefinites were tabulated. This procedure gave a total number of potential occurrences for multiple negation. From this total the number of actual occurrences of multiple negation was tabulated. The percentage of actual multiple negatives in relation to potential multiple negatives was then computed (see figure 1).

Similarly, Wolfram has tabulated the relative absence of the final member of word final monomorphemic consonant clusters (e.g., test, mask, mind, cold, etc.) among Detroit Negroes by social class (Wolfram, 1969). The data are presented in figure 2.

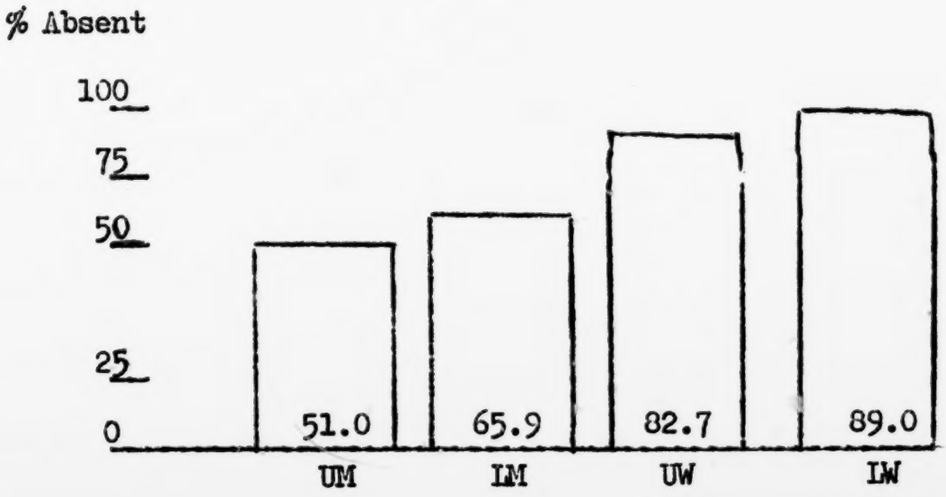


Figure 2

Absence of Final Cluster Member in Monomorphemic Clusters, Negroes

From the preceding figures our techniques of discovering relative frequencies should be clear. Equally clear should be the reasons underlying our belief that the major linguistic differences across social class are not a matter of the presence versus absence of a feature as much as the relative frequencies of their distributions. Further research may reveal, in addition, other structural differences across dialects relating, no doubt, to such things as different ordering of rules between social dialects.

Although the identification of social status was difficult to achieve, race was relatively easy. Because of the nature of unequal opportunity in this country, it would be unfair to compare all Negro speech with all white speech, irrespective of at least the dimension of social status. Consequently the following figure displays both race and SES simultaneously. Figure 3 shows the percentage of noun phrases in which potential (grammatically possible) occurrences of pronominal apposition (e.g., "me and my brother, we went to the park") were realized.

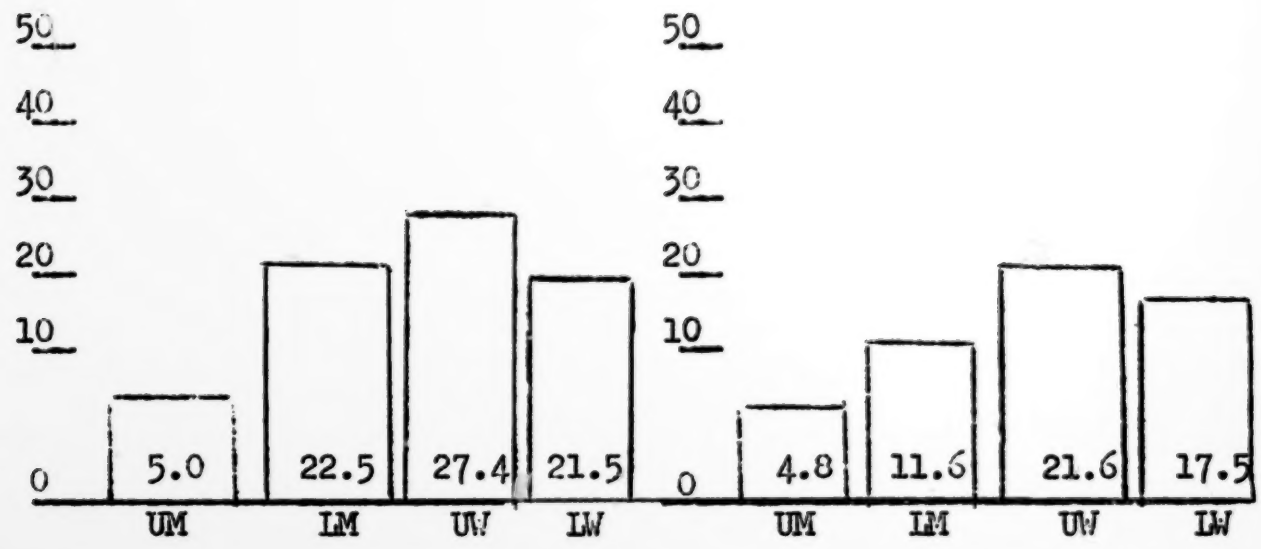


Figure 3

Pronominal Apposition

Of particular interest with respect to the racial contrast in the use of pronominal apposition is the point at which greatest contrast exists, at the margins of the Lower Middle Class, and that whites apparently become more sensitive to this index than do Blacks. One further observes that whereas multiple negation is a grammatical index for which rather high sensitivity exists (due largely to the schoolrooms of America), pronominal apposition does not seem to share this high sensitivity as an index of social stratification. It does seem to contrast racially, however, in that Lower Middle Class Negroes sharply contrast with Upper Middle Class Negroes in their use of pronominal apposition whereas the sharp contrast along white speakers is between the Lower Middle and Upper Working Classes.

With this brief summary of the kinds of work being done on objective language data, let us turn for a moment, to current research on subjective reactions to language data and language concepts.

Subjective Reactions to Language Data and Concepts

It is not uncommon for listeners to assign class status and ethnic identification of individuals on the basis of their spoken language (Putnam and O'Hern 1955, Lambert et al, 1960, Harms 1961, Bergin 1962, Nader 1962, Buck 1968). This is especially true in terms of identification of Negro and white speakers. Although we continually make assumptions about individuals from the manner in which they express themselves, there is very little systematic research concerning the psycho-social and linguistic variables which play a role for the listener in the identification process.

William Labov's pioneering efforts in the field provided a useful empirical model for further research (Labov 1967). Working with five phonological features, Labov found that the subjective reactions of his subjects were inarticulate and below the level of conscious awareness (Labov 1967: 405). He found that there is no vocabulary of socially meaningful terms with which the subjects could evaluate speech and that although New Yorkers often held strong views about the speech of their city, only a few could cite specific words, sounds or phrases which adequately characterized what they meant. Labov's exploratory work revealed that for subjective reaction tests, natural utterances of native speakers were superior to synthetic representations made by experimenters.

It is not our purpose here to summarize the results of research in this area. What is of major concern is that research into subjective reaction revealed patterns quite similar to those yielded by objective language data.

How the Subjective Data were gathered:

The Detroit study (Shuy, Baratz and Wolfram, Sociolinguistic Factors in Speech Identification" NIMH, Project No. MH 15048-01) used a tape stimulus which included 21 discourses of between 20 and 30 seconds each and 9 shorter discourses which were extracted from the speech samples of the longer utterances. The speakers were selected from the corpus of the Detroit Dialect Study (Shuy, Wolfram and Riley, 1968; Wolfram, 1969). All speech samples were taken from tapes of adult male, Detroit residents between the ages of 30 and 55. Three speakers represented each of the upper middle, lower middle, upper working and lower working classes of the Detroit Negro population. Also included were three speakers in each of the upper middle, lower middle and upper working classes of the Detroit whites.

The judges, or respondents to the tape stimulus, were 620 Detroit residents - 286 were sixth graders, 170 were eleventh graders and 164 were adults. 256 were Negroes and 364 were whites. 305 were male and 315 female. In terms of social class, 167 were upper middle, 173 lower middle, 140 upper working and 140 lower working.

One of the judges' tasks was to listen to the tape, then respond to several seven point semantic differential scales using polar adjectives:

awkward ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: graceful

relaxed ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: tense

formal ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: informal

thin ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: thick

correct ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: ___: incorrect

The responses were then quantified, using slot one as 1, slot 2 as, 2 and so on. Table 1 displays some of the response means to the correct/ incorrect scale.

Table 1

RESPONSE MEANS TO SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL

Correct - Incorrect Scale

Male & Female Respondents	Negro stimuli UM	LM	UW	LW	White stimuli UM	LM	UW
C	3.26	4.27	4.44	5.32	2.70	3.34	4.71
T	3.13	4.46	4.87	5.97	2.52	3.44	5.35
A	3.13	4.01	4.93	5.95	2.29	3.55	5.53
N	3.02	4.25	4.81	5.88	2.65	3.33	5.03
W	3.31	4.28	4.64	5.57	2.44	3.51	5.24
Ss	3.18	4.27	4.72	5.71	2.53	3.43	5.15

One may recall that the objective data for Detroit as shown in Figure 3 demonstrate that there is very little difference between the speech of UM and LM whites. But there is a clear demarcation between the speech of LM Negroes and UM Negroes. Some of the subjective reactions as revealed in our research indicate that respondents similarly have a difficult time differentiating between UM and LM whites, but generally distinguish between LM and UW, reflecting the contour breaks of the objective data shown in figure 3 (see Table 1).

For the Negro judges, the subjective reactions to the SES of the speaker on the correct/incorrect scale indicates that UM is regarded quite different from LM and UW, which are considered quite similar. UM is considered relatively neutral but LM and UW are considered somewhat incorrect. In the actual taped speech samples, UM and LM are differentiated from each other by phonological features and UM and LM are differentiated from UW and LW on the basis of both phonology and grammar. It is therefore interesting to note that in the subjective reactions UM are distinguished from LM and UW which were seen as quite similar. Thus the grammatical differences between LM and UW were apparently overlooked in favor of the phonological features differentiating UM and LM. On this basis, one may suggest that a Negro speaker who retains certain phonological features indicating racial identity will be considered on the same level with the speaker having stigmatized grammatical and phonological features.

Although the similarities of the social stratification revealed by objective language data and the subjective responses to these language data are limited here in quantity, let it be known that other examples may also be found. Our research gives clear indication that subjective language data can be used to great advantage in linguistic studies of this sort and that the researcher may get as much mileage out of a speaker's receptive behavior as from his sending functions.

The useful correlation of objective and subjective language data ways by no means the only issue with implications for current sociolinguistic theory. From this recent research we may also gain insights into the current controversy over whether or not there is something

called Negro speech, the nature of social markedness, the ability of the general public to make judgments about social dialects and the tools for measuring these responses to taped stimuli.

The Issue of Negro Speech

There has been considerable discussion among linguists as to whether or not it is possible to characterize a kind of speech as Negro Speech or, more recently, Black English. There are those who say that there is essentially no difference between the English used by Negroes and whites in certain parts of the South. Others say that there are clear differences in the South which contrast a creole origin of the speech of Negroes to the European origin of the whites. Still other linguists are less interested in the historical origins but point to synchronic differences between Negro and white speech. Our research deals with the synchronic situation without ruling out this possibility of diachronic influences on the synchronic description.

It is clear from our results that the speech of Negroes and whites is consistently distinguished in Detroit, since the judges correctly identified Negroes 80% of the time and white speakers 81.2% of the time from as little as 20 to 30 seconds of continuous speech Furthermore, in nine short stimuli of from three to five seconds each, Negro speaker were identified correctly 70.1% of the time and whites 67.3% of the time.

What is particulary interesting about this information is that Negro judges did only slightly better than whites in identifying Negroes (3.8%) and whites did only slightly better than Negroes in judging whites (7.2%). Age does not particularly increase ability to determine the race of a speaker.

Children, teenagers, and adults vary only 2.4% in their ability to identify Negro speakers. The socio-economic status of the listener - judges also seemed relatively unimportant in identifying Negro speakers. Upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-working, and lower-working groups varied only 2.3% in identifying Negroes. Upper-middle class judges are only slightly better than the other socio-economic groups in identifying white speakers but the total range of variation is only 10.4% between all four groups of judges in identifying whites.

From these data, it seems relatively clear that Detroiters of all ages do extremely well in identifying the race of the speaker. Frequently it had been suggested that there is no such thing as Negro speech and that it is unfair to speak to the Negro nonstandard English. The evidence of this research makes it rather clear that in Detroit, regardless of the age, race, sex or socio-economic status of the listener, Negro identity of taped speakers can be made accurately from a minimum of 74.4% (adult white females) to a maximum of 86.2% (adult Negro females) of the time. From this it appears that there is a clear polarization in Detroit (and probably elsewhere) which enables residents there to think accurately along the lines of race with respect to the speech of their city. One might suggest that further research must now determine the extent to which Southern whites and Negroes can identify the race of speakers.

The Issue of Social Markedness

The most significant results of our research into the ability of a listener to correctly identify the socio-economic status of Detroiters is that the lower the socio-economic status the more accurate the identifications. All respondents identified upper-middle class speakers

accurately only 29.6% of the time, lower middle class speakers 31.8% of the time, upper working class speakers 40.8% of the time and lower working class speakers a whopping 60.8% of the time.

When the identification of both race and socio-economic status of the taped recorded speakers are examined, it is clear that the lower the socio-economic status, the more accurately Negroes are identified, whereas for whites, the higher the socio-economic status the more accurately they are identified. Of particular interest here is the fact that Negro upper-middle class speakers were identified accurately by Negroes 17.8% and by whites only 8.2%. If UM Negroes were excluded from the tape stimulus, no doubt the overall accuracy of identification would increase from 80% to 95% or so.

These data have several important things to say to students of language. It seems clear, for example, that the most outstanding fact in the differentiation of social dialects in Detroit is the presence of "stigmatized" grammatical and phonological features in the speech of lower SES groups. The speech of the middle class is typified by the absence of these features. This is not to say that there are no prestige features in the speech of middle class informants. Indeed objective research (Fasold 1968) does indicate the presence of certain prestigious forms. But since the current study reveals that it is easier to accurately identify a lower class than a middle class speaker, one can conclude that prestige features of the middle class are not nearly as obtrusive as the stigmatized features of the working class. One may say that the speech of the working class seems to be socially marked and the speech of the middle class socially unmarked.

It is of further interest to note the social markedness of speech clusters in different ways across race. Social markedness of Negro speech is distributed so that N UM speakers are distinguished (subjectively and objectively) from N LM, UW and LW and N LM and UW speakers are similarly distinguished from LW. UM and LM white speakers, on the other hand, are clearly distinguished from UW.

The Issue of Popular Judgments Regarding Dialects

In a search for a terminology by which language judgments can be made meaningfully by laymen, the semantic differential scale which was used for 5 speech concepts (Detroit Speech, Negro Speech, White Southern Speech, British Speech and Standard Speech) proved interesting though not always useful. Detroiters of all types seem rather neutral about the speech of their city. Unlike some cities, such as New York, there appears to be no distinct entity conceived of as Detroit Speech by Detroiters. On the other hand, it is worth noting that the higher the SES of the judge, the higher he values British Speech. This concept, however, is neutral less valuable to lower SES groups.

These data support previous research in which it was suggested that Negroes regarded white Southern Speech more negatively than did whites, and whites regarded Negro Speech more perjoratively than did Negroes (Lambert 1960). What is of more interest, however, is that whites saw less difference between Southern Speech and Negro Speech than did Negroes. Negroes view Negro Speech and Detroit Speech about the same, whereas whites see Negro Speech and Detroit Speech as rather distinct. Since both Negroes and whites assign about the same values to Detroit Speech this suggests that Negroes consider their speech patterns as Detroit Speech even though whites distinguish Negro Speech from Detroit Speech.

This exploration into subjective reactions to speech concepts may be regarded as an interesting step toward understanding a broader spectrum of language in society than is provided by either the objective use of language or the judgmental reactions from a tape recorded stimulus. Further investigation into other speech concepts is in order and cross-sectional studies of such concepts as Negro Speech may be quite revealing of a changing social climate.

Using the Semantic Differential Scale

On the basis of this exploratory use of the semantic differential scale in response to speech samples and language concepts, it is clear that this can be a useful tool to compensate for the general inarticulateness of the public in evaluating speech. On the correct - incorrect scale which accompanied the speech samples, for example, the judgments of all subjects stratify quite neatly according to socio economic status of the speaker UM $\overline{M}$ = 2.86, LM $\overline{M}$ = 3.85, UW $\overline{M}$ = 4.93, LW $\overline{M}$ = 5.71.

It appears that semantic differential responses to speech samples stratify in ways that would suggest value judgments being placed on those linguistic features which are used to identify race and SES. This reaction is also seen in response to other scales. Some scales are apparently more meaningful to judges concerning their subjective reaction to language concepts. For example it appears that generally the thick - thin scale does not elicit this kind of stratification. It would appear that further research might suggest scales that are more relevant to individuals' judgments concerning language.

Our pre-testing indicated that the semantic differential response to speech samples could not be used in this experiment with working class respondents without interfering with their performance on the

other tasks presented. However, middle class sixth grade children use the semantic differential scale as well as eleventh graders or adults. The responses of sixth grade children were not essentially different from other subjects on the correct-incorrect, graceful-awkward, tense-relaxed or thick-thin scales. There is adequate evidence here to suggest that the semantic differential scale can be used with children as early as the sixth grade in language judgment experiments.

When the semantic differential scale was used in connection with speech concepts, sixth graders seemed to be as competent as teenagers on the evaluative scales but they responded differently on the presumed potency scales. This suggests that the technique can be useful with sixth grade children as long as evaluative scales are used.

In summary, this brief report has called attention to a type of research on language which holds considerable promise: (1) for supplementing information obtainable through objective speech samples (note the supportive nature of objective language data and subjective responses to such data), (2) for enlarging our knowledge of public conceptions of social speech communities (such as Negro speech), (3) for providing insights into the nature of how standard and non-standard varieties of English may be discussed (social markedness) and (4) for discovering a vocabulary or technique with which laymen's evaluations and attitudes toward language may be observed.

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